

## **Rabbi Steven L. Denker to Receive Doctor of Divinity at HUC-JIR Graduation Ceremony in New York**

**Rabbi Steven L. Denker**, Rabbi at **Temple Emanu El**, Orange Village, OH, will receive a Doctor of Divinity, *honoris causa*, from the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)**. The degree will be granted at HUC-JIR's New York Graduation ceremony on Thursday, April 30, 2009 at Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.

**Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.**, announced HUC-JIR alumni recipients who will be awarded honorary Doctorates of Divinity, Music, Jewish Religious Education, and Jewish Communal Service, as well as the Founders' Medallion, in recognition of their 25 years of distinguished professional service.

Rabbi Ellenson said, "Rabbi Denker has nourished the flame of Jewish identity at Temple Emanu El. His scholarly lectures highlight the breadth of his knowledge, and his service to the Chicago Jewish community for over two decades reflected a deep and abiding concern for social action and ethics.

Rabbi Denker came to Temple Emanu El in July 2004 as interim-Rabbi charged with helping the congregation through the process of healing and self-evaluation that resulted in Emanu El's construction of its new facility in Orange Village, Ohio. In 2006 he became the permanent Rabbi of the congregation. The new temple, opened in July 2008, has attracted scores of new families and a 40% religious school enrollment increase over the prior year.

Rabbi Denker is a member of the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and a co-Chair of the Federation's Campaign for Jewish Needs

Ordained at HUC-JIR/NY in 1984, Rabbi Denker was an Associate Rabbi of Temple Sholom, Chicago; Rabbi of Beth Shalom – Northern Illinois Jewish Community Center in DeKalb, IL; and a Senior Lecturer of Theology at Loyola University, Chicago. From 1994-2004 he was the Rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in Chicago's Water Tower Place.

In Chicago he served on several communal boards and committees concerned with Jewish Education, community relations and the elderly. Rabbi Denker chaired the Chicago regional committee for Reform Mohalim and represented the Central Conference of American Rabbis on the Reform Movement's Joint Commission on Interreligious Affairs.

Born and raised in New York City, Rabbi Denker holds a BA from the City University of NY. Before entering rabbinical school in 1979 he was Director of Community Relations for the New York Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

For more information on the HUC-JIR Graduation, Investiture, and Ordination ceremonies in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, please visit <http://www.huc.edu/newspubs/pressroom/article.php?pressroomid=271>.

*Founded in 1875, **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion** is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding. Visit us at [www.huc.edu](http://www.huc.edu).*

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